

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 FDRE-00 HEW-06 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-02 PRS-01 DHA-02 SCA-01 SCSE-00 EB-07 PM-04 H-02

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O R 091724Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7477

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMCONSUL MILAN

AMCONSUL NAPLES

AMCONSUL TRIESTE

AMCONSUL ZAGREB

US MISSION NATO 3306

SECDEF WASHDC

CNO WASHDC

JCS WASHDC

CSA

CSAF

USCINCEUR

CINCUSAREUR

CINCUSAFE

CINCUSNAVEUR

CDR 40TH TAC GP AVIANO

CDR 8TH SUPPORT GP LIVORNO

USIA WASHDC

US MISSION GENEVA 0433

USUN NEW YORK 2784

UNCLAS ROME 7533

E.O. 11652: N/A

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TAGS: SWEL, IT

SUBJECT: EARTHQUAKE IN NORTHERN ITALY

PRESS COMMENTARY OF DISASTER RELIEF EFFORTS:

1. SUNDAY EDITIONS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL PRESS GENERALLY FAVORABLE TO GOI REGIONAL/PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS' EFFORTS THUS FAR WITH EXCEPTION OF IL GAZZETTINO. ALL PAPERS INCLUDING L'UNITA BACKING MORO DECISION TO DECENTRALIZE RELIEF EFFORTS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. PRESS ALSO HAS HIGH PRAISE FOR ITALIAN MILITARY EFFORTS. HOWEVER, CRITICAL COMMENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL FAILURES APPEAR IN ALL PAPERS WITH VARYING DEGREES OF INTENSITY. A SUMMARY OF THESE COMMENTS FOLLOWS:

A. FROM MESSAGGERO VENETO, UDINE: ARTICLE SUMMARIZING DAMAGE IN PORDENONE PROVINCE STATES ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN SLOW IN COMING AND ATTRIBUTES DELAYS TO PORDENONE'S HAVING SUFFERED FEWER CASUALTIES THAN UDINE PROVINCE. SPECIFICALLY:
(A) ASSISTANCE TO SMALL VILLAGES WAS NOT COORDINATED AND WAS LEFT TO LOCAL INITIATIVES. (B) SUPPLIES OF TENTS AND POTABLE WATER HAD NOT ARRIVED IN SOME AREAS AS OF SATURDAY EVEN THOUGH ARTICLE STATES SUPPLY WAS BEING ARRANGED.

B. ARTICLES ON GEMONA, MAIANO, TARCENTO AND OTHER TOWNS STATE THAT THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF DISINFECTANTS AND WATER-PURIFYING CHEMICALS, A LACK OF TENTS, AND A SHORTAGE OF PORTABLE LIGHTING EQUIPMENT TO PERMIT NIGHT EXCAVATION.

C. FROM IL PICCOLO TRIESTE: EDITORIAL CHARACTERIZED FIRST 24 HOURS OF RELIEF EFFORT AS THOSE OF A "GIANT WITHOUT AHEAD", AND POINTED TO LACK OF DIRECTION FROM RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES WITH EXCEPTION OF PREFETTURA OF UDINE AS CAUSE OF DISORDER.

D. FROM IL GAZZETTO VENICE: FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL CRITICAL OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ACCUSING ROME OF UNDERESTIMATING EXTENT OF DISASTER FOR SEVERAL HOURS AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE AND STATING THAT THERE WERE SOME WHO "PREFERRED THEIR WEEKENDS TO THEIR OWN WORK". EDITORIAL GOES ON TO CRITICIZE ORGANIZATION OF RELIEF EFFORTS STATING, "IT IS NECESSARY TO ORGANIZE GOOD WILL...BUT IT IS NECESSARY ALSO TO REORGANIZE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES".
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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM NEWS ARTICLE: (A) IN VILLAGE OF VAL DI RISIA FIRST HELP ARRIVED 24 HOURS AFTER EARTHQUAKE. THERE ARE CONTINUING REQUESTS FOR FOOD. (B) AT FOLGARIA, WATER SHORTAGES CONTINUING. (C) AT TRASAGHIS SHORTAGE OF TYPHOID VACCINE, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES IN VICINITY. LACK OF TENTS. (D) MAIANO: LACK OF COORDINATION. IT TOOK 5 HOURS TO SET UP TENTS DUE TO CONFUSION. (D) MONTENARS AND ARTEGNA: REPORTS OF DISORGANIZATION AND

LACK OF CAMP KITCHENS AND ASSISTANCE IN CARING OF EDIBILITY OF FOODSTUFFS. (E) PORDENONE PROVINCE: IN ONE ARTICLE PROVINCE HELP DIRECTOR REPORTS SUFFICIENCY OF HOSPITAL BEDS, DOCTORS, VACCINES, PLASMA. ANOTHER ARTICLE SAYS TOWNS AND PROVINCES LACK BEDS, SUPPLIES, VACCINES.

E. FROM REGIONAL L'UNITA (COMMUNIST):
EDITORIAL STATES THERE HAS BEEN A LACK OF COORDINATION AND THAT IT WAS MISSING ENTIRELY IN SOME AREAS. DELAYS, INTERFERENCES, UNCERTAINTIES IN DECISION-MAKING NOTED WITHOUT CITING SPECIFIC CASES. TWO ARTICLES: (A) NUMBER OF DOCTORS, MEDICINES AND SUPPLIES SEEM ADEQUATE. HOWEVER, LACK OF ORGANIZATION PRESENTING APPLICATION TO NEEDY AREAS. (B) CONFUSION AT UDINE. PREFETTURA CITED: WATER TRUCKS WAITING FOR WATER WHILE MAYOR OF TARCENTO WAITING FOR WATER. (C) MAIANO: EXCAVATION OF COLLAPSED CONDOMINIUMS STOPPED SEVERAL HOURS FRIDAY NIGHT. CRIES OF THOSE TRAPPED IN RUINS STILL BEING HEARD SATURDAY MORNING. (D) LACK OF ORGANIZATION OF HEALTH RESOURCES: MEDICAL PERSONNEL FLOWING INTO AREA BUT NOT BEING DIRECTED TO LOCATIONS ESTABLISHED TO PROVIDE MEDICAL SERVICES. SHORTAGE OF WATER, MEDICINES, SURGICAL TREATMENT AND ANTIBIOTICS. MILITARY AMBULANCES DRIVERS DID NOT KNOW WHERE TO TAKE VICTIMS.

3. WITH REGARD TO RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS, BOTH PRESS AND MEDIA ALREADY MAKING FREQUENT COMMENTS THAT NEED FOR RECONSTRUCTION TO BE DIRECTED LOCALLY, CITING GOI FAILURES TO REBUILD AFTER 1968 EARTHQUAKE IN SICILY. VOLPE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISASTER RELIEF, PRESS COMMENTS, DISASTER REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 MAY 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ROME07533
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760179-0609
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760575/aaaacmfp.tel
Line Count: 142
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AID
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUN 2004 by wolfsd>; APPROVED <24 JUN 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EARTHQUAKE IN NORTHERN ITALY PRESS COMMENTARY OF DISASTER RELIEF EFFORTS
TAGS: SWEL, IT, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006